

for suspicions lingered both in France and Germany. The election of Hindenburg as President produced a tremor of anxiety, and an unsuccessful demand from Berlin that the question of war guilt must first be settled provoked annoyance. Without the tact and perseverance of Chamberlain and D'Abernon the project might have been wrecked. The final arrangements for the conference were made when the British, French, Italian and Belgian Ministers met at Geneva in September, and Locarno was chosen to suit Mussolini's convenience. The meeting opened on October 5 and the agreements were initialled on October 16. A German attempt to raise the question of evacuation and reparations endangered the negotiations till it was abandoned by Stresemann. The treaty was signed in London on December 1, 1925, in what was henceforth known as the Locarno room.

A long letter from Chamberlain to Sir William Tyrrell, Permanent Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office, vividly describes the closing phase of the negotiations. "The wonderful week is over. I have lived such days and celebrated such a birthday as it is given to no man to experience twice. . . . Beyond and above all else is my sense of profound thankfulness for the success attained and the way in which it was attained, and my deep gratitude that I was allowed to take part in it. Next comes my wonder at the simplicity of it all. . . . Once the policy was accepted, each step followed the other as of course." Briand took Mrs. Chamberlain's hands in his and, with tears in his eyes, repeated again and again, "*Ah, sans lui je ne Vaurais jamais tente*" Next moment Mussolini caught her hand and covered it with kisses. It was the supreme moment of Austen Chamberlain's career. To-day the sunshine

of Locarno seems merely a dim memory, but at the time we welcomed its rays with gratitude and relief. The treaty, declared the Foreign Secretary in Parliament on November 18, was not the end of appeasement but the beginning. It marked a turning point in the history of Europe, perhaps in the history of the world.

The work of the Conference was enshrined in eight treaties. We participated only in the guarantee of the Franco-German and Belgo-German frontiers against aggression, popularly known as the Locarno Pact, between England, France, Germany, Belgium and Italy. Germany, France, Belgium, Poland and Czechoslovakia undertook to settle all disputes by arbitration. England and Italy undertook no responsibilities